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RUCNARF/ASEAN REGIONAL FORUM COLLECTIVE

UNCLAS HO CHI MINH CITY 001236

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SUBJECT: GVN REACTS TO CROSS BORDER MIGRATION TO CAMBODIA

REF: HCMC 1186 AND PREVIOUS

1. (SBU) During an October 27 meeting to review the results of our recent refugee monitoring visit to the Central Highlands (reftel), our counterparts in the HCMC External Relations Office told PolOff that they were instructed to express GVN concern over the continued outflow of ethnic minority individuals to Cambodia. They said that this outflow, principally of economic migrants, continues to foster instability in the Central Highlands. A key factor for the continued outflow is the "pull factor" of overseas resettlement, they said. Our contacts said bluntly that the pull factor is intensified by the fact that many individuals screened out by UNHCR are ultimately interviewed by U.S. officials and resettled in the United States.

2. (SBU) According to ERO, the GVN would prefer that UNHCR adjudicate the cases in Cambodia according to the Tripartite agreement. Those that UNHCR decides are legitimate refugees should be resettled, the others returned to Vietnam. However, the GVN would not object to the United States absorbing any of rejected cases, such as the 82 UNHCR-rejected cases currently pending DHS interview in Cambodia. The GVN wants the UNHCR screen-out individuals returned first to Vietnam. Following their return, the U.S. could conduct a its own screening process inside Vietnam, similar to the ROVR or VISAS-93 family reunification process, where candidates are interviewed and processed in HCMC. Ultimately, the GVN wants the refugee camps in Cambodia completely closed, our contact stated.

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